

Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Board

Minutes for June 12, 2003

Attendees:

Board Members:

Chairman Ralph Hambrick, Vice Chairman Sue Cecil, Louise Burke, Catherine Harold, Lynn Newcomb, John Pearsall, Greg Velzy and Jonathan Young.

Others:

Jay Alexander (VCU Student), Lamont Benjamin (Dept. of Public Works), Phil Gardner (Riparian Land Owner), Eddie Hufner (James River Parks), M. S. Khara (Dept. of Public Works), Lyn Lanier (Friends of James River Park), John Maddox (Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP), Eric Sundberg (Riparian Land Owner), John Taylor (Riparian Land Owner), Mark Vasco (Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP), Ralph White (James River Parks), Kristy Woodall (VCU Student), and R. B. Young (Emeritus Board Member).

Chairman Hambrick called the meeting to order and initiated a review of the minutes from the May meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

A series of announcements were disclosed including the rescheduled James River Cleanup, James River Sojourn, Mysteries of the James River series and the recently completed Oregon Hill footbridge.

A comprehensive presentation regarding the proposed Riverside Drive riverbank stabilization project was provided by the City of Richmond's Department of Public Works and a private firm, Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP. The proposed project would address a 900-foot section of riverside drive where erosion currently threatens the integrity of the existing bank and shoulder. The proposed design would result in the fastening of a 3-foot wide concrete band to the existing rock within the bank. The concrete band would be concealed with numerous boulders spaced at approximate 20-foot intervals. Approximately 50 to 55 new boulders would be necessary to supplement the existing boulders. Any trees removed during construction would be replaced with new trees. The total construction costs are anticipated at around \$120,000 to \$140,000 and will more than likely be funded with Federal monies. Construction should begin sometime this coming fall or winter.

Both Board members and the community at-large communicated several concerns though the popular sentiment of those in attendance favored the project. Said concerns included the closure of Riverside Drive, mosquito breeding grounds within the vicinity,

salamander protection, access to Pony Pasture, texture of the proposed shoulder and the installation of pipe culverts.

Each of the referenced concerns was addressed. First, Riverside Drive will be closed for approximately 45 to 60 days. Second, Ralph White communicated his willingness to stock mosquito eating fish in existing pools of water in order to alleviate any mosquito problems. Third, all participants agreed that the salamander habitat must not be disturbed in order to avoid jeopardizing Federal approval of the project. Fourth, access to Pony Pasture will not be affected. Fifth, the Board unanimously voted to endorse a concrete shoulder subject cost feasibility. Sixth, the installation of pipe culverts will require the voluntary approval of riparian landowners.

Hambrick alerted attendees that Greg Velzy communicated the Board's position regarding Surface Water Management to the State Water Control Board.

Greg Velzy, R. B. Young and Lynn Newcomb requested that the Board acknowledge Dominion Power's contributions to the riverfront including the recently constructed Oregon Hill footbridge and Dominion's willingness to address the Board's concerns regarding the new Dominion office tower.

Lyn Lanier briefed the Board regarding the status of the Pump House and discussions pertaining to a proposed blasting within the area. Ralph White alerted the Board that the Pump House was recently burglarized resulting in the theft of numerous pictures. In addition, White informed the Board of upcoming stone removal from the canal.

Ralph White announced an agreement concerning the City Parks' acquisition of new lands at no cost that will help connect the current park's geography and create a more contiguous map.

Hambrick alerted attendees of his discussions pertaining to the Board's upcoming reclassification.

The Board recognized Louise Burke's resignation and congratulated her for a lifetime of dedication to the James River. Burke was presented with gifts and was addressed by several attendees who conveyed their appreciation for all she has done for the James River. Burke was acknowledged as the mother of the James.

The Board adjourned at 2:10.